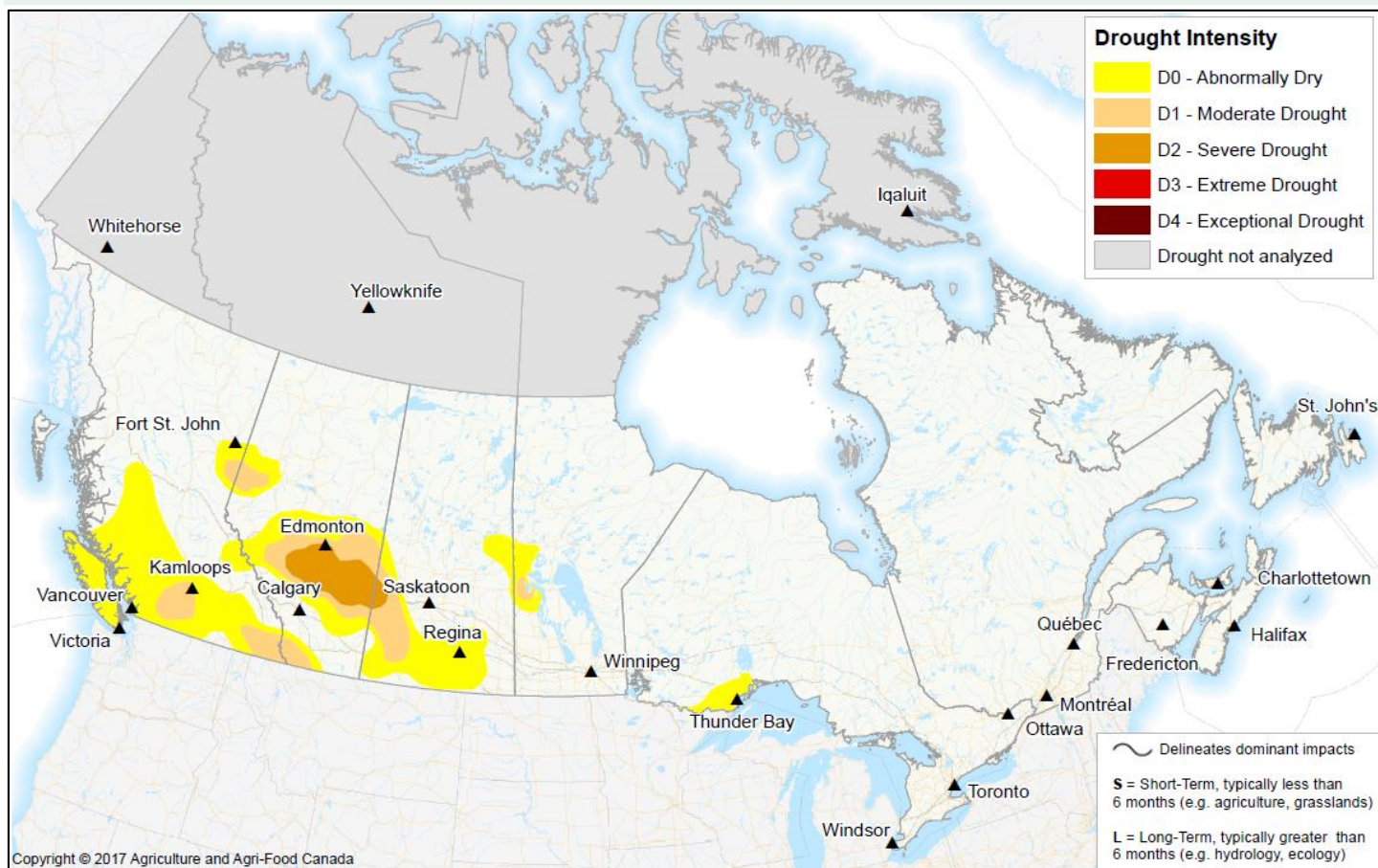


Canadian Drought Monitor

Conditions as of February 28, 2009



During February, drought conditions intensified in the western region of the country due to low snow fall. Much of southern British Columbia is abnormally dry with mountain snow packs well below normal. As a result spring runoff forecasts for many of Alberta's river basins are below normal. Central Alberta remains in a persistent drought condition. This area of dryness extends into southwest Saskatchewan where precipitation was below normal in February. Most of Manitoba received above normal precipitation, except for west-central areas where dry conditions continue.

Pacific Region (BC)

Well below normal snow accumulations persist throughout southern British Columbia.



Vancouver Island has been classified in a D0 (Abnormally Dry) as snow pillows range from 50 to 60% of normal, which is up to 500 mm (20 inches) below normal. This region received less than 40% of normal precipitation throughout the month of February and has been between 40 to 60% of normal over the past six months. The southern coast and interior of British Columbia is also well below normal with minimal snow pack across the entire region. The Vancouver and lower mainland area as well as regions northward are less than 85% of normal over the past three to six months, and snow pillows are about 400 mm (16 inches) below normal. Central interior areas west of Williams Lake and Prince George remain 40-60% of normal over the past three months. As a result, much of southern and west-central British Columbia has been classified as D0 (Abnormally Dry). Southern interior regions are in a similar situation with extremely low snow packs for this time of year. Areas west of the Okanagan Valley have minimal snow pack, with some areas having little to no snow on the ground. As a result, the area from Kamloops to Abbotsford has been upgraded to a D1 (Moderate Drought). The southeast corner of the province also remains below normal; snow pillows near Nelson are up to 400 mm (16 inches) below normal, and therefore this region remains listed as D1 (Moderate Drought). There was little to no improvement for the Peace Region in February as Fort St. John and area received less than half of the normal precipitation. Thus, this area is still classified as D0 (Abnormally Dry) and D1 (Moderate Drought). Below normal conditions have persisted here since the last growing season.

Prairie Region (AB, SK, MB)

The Peace Region in Alberta fared the same as in British Columbia in February with some locations receiving less than 40% of normal precipitation. Therefore this region remains classified in a D0 (Abnormally Dry) and D1 (Moderate Drought) condition. Much of central Alberta is enveloped in a drought condition, with a D2 (Severe Drought) classification stretching from northwest of Red Deer eastward to just across the Saskatchewan border, near Kindersley. Much of this large area has received less than 50 mm (two inches) of precipitation since last September, translating into less than 40% of normal. Although the region north of Edmonton had near normal precipitation in February, it has been below normal over the past six months. In addition, the D0 (Abnormally Dry) area has been extended into the Rocky Mountains west of Jasper, as this area has seen below normal snow pack over much of the winter season. Southeast of Edmonton in eastcentral Alberta, snow cover is quite sparse. Areas around Coronation and Hanna and along the Saskatchewan border have received less than 8 mm of precipitation in February, and snow water equivalent levels are less than 50% of normal at about 10 mm (less than one half of an inch). This scenario, combined with the dry conditions in previous months, has meant an expansion of the D1 (Moderate Drought) and D2 (Severe Drought) regions. In addition, spring runoff levels are forecast to be below normal, and more moisture is needed or spring planting conditions will be quite poor. The Pincher Creek area in the southwest corner of the province remains in a D1 (Moderate Drought) condition, having received between 40-60% of normal precipitation for the winter season and snow water equivalents of less than 10 mm (less than one half of an inch). West central Saskatchewan snow water equivalent remains below 10 mm at month's end, which is less than 50% below normal.

As a result, the D1 (Moderate Drought) region has increased. Along the US border, the Val Marie area received less than 5 mm of precipitation in February, and has been placed into a D0 (Abnormally Dry) classification. In the south-central region of the province, there is optimism that the above-normal snow accumulations should replenish the on-farm surface water supplies and improve soil moisture going into the spring, thus alleviating some of the lingering drought conditions. However, until the snow melts, producers continue to be affected by last summer's drought and will continue to be forced to haul water for livestock. Consequently, this region has remained in a D0 (Abnormally Dry) and D1 (Moderate Drought) classification. Although the Hudson Bay area in the northeast has received near normal precipitation for month, it has only reported 60-85% of normal for the past six to twelve months, thus remaining classified in a D0 (Abnormally Dry) condition.

In Manitoba, the Swan River area remains classified in a D0 (Abnormally Dry) and D1 (Moderate Drought) drought condition. This region has received below normal precipitation over the last month and less than 85% of normal precipitation over the past six to twelve months. At this time, spring runoff volumes throughout northern Manitoba are forecast to be below normal. The remaining areas of Manitoba have received above normal precipitation in February, and some southern areas are forecast to have excessive spring flooding.

Central Region (ON, QC)

Dry conditions persist in north western Ontario where Thunder Bay received about 70% of normal precipitation in February, and areas to the northeast less than 40%. This situation has not changed over the past three months, and the region continues to be labelled as a D0 (Abnormally Dry) classification.